ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In contrast to prior art picture database browsing and retrieving methods which require the tedious opening and perusing of directories, folders and files, the present-inventive graphical user interface system (500) and method produces several display levels (100, 200, 300, 400) of user-friendly geographical/map metaphors from picture metadata with picture icons (116, 216, 316) representing pictures captured at locations on maps. The characteristics of the display levels (100, 200, 300, 400) are programmable by the user. In the preferred embodiment, the size of the picture icons (116, 216, 316) is proportional to the number of pictures captured at the icon location. Further features of the present-inventive graphical user interface (GUI) include a "tool tip" which appears indicating the number of pictures represented by a picture icon (116, 216, 316), when the screen cursor is placed over the picture icon (116, 216, 316). In an example according to the present-inventive GUI, the first display level (100) includes a world map metaphor (114) with picture icons (116) located at the global capture locations of the pictures in the picture database. Each additional display level (200, 300, 400) provides greater geographic specificity of the picture capture locations. Such additional display levels include continent or country of capture (200), state or territory of capture (300), and city or town of capture (400), etc., with the last display level including thumbnail representations (430-448) of the pictures captured at the specified capture locations.